



## **2019 Report from the Ministry Network Addressing ECCT's 2018 Resolution on Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation**

At ECCT's 2018 Annual Convention, The Mission Council, The Standing Committee, and The Commission on Ministry submitted a resolution to Convention entitled Affirming Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation. The resolution was amended from the floor and the final resolution stated:

*RESOLVED*, that ECCT launch a "Season of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation," to last a minimum of two years, with the initial goals of: introducing foundational concepts, language, and tools to help encourage and enable congregations to begin opening hearts and minds; recognizing the reality of white supremacy and bias against people of color; and awakening Episcopalians in Connecticut to the need for concerted action to address the ongoing injustice of the racial divide; and

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that the second Sunday of February be set aside as a Day of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation, during which parishes are asked to begin a conversation about the sin of racism in our lives and in the world by hosting a forum on racial healing, justice, and reconciliation, utilizing video and discussion questions from the Joint Session on Racial Reconciliation from the 2018 General Convention of The Episcopal Church; and

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that each parish includes a simple report, which will be submitted to the Mission Council, with their annual Parochial Reports detailing how they have engaged in conversation, study, and action regarding racial healing, justice, reconciliation, and the sin of racism; and

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that all leaders in clergy transition processes be trained on the impact of white privilege and the importance of including diverse candidates in every search, and that parishes in clergy transition processes report the number of candidates of color included in their process to the Office of the Canon for Mission Leadership; and

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED*, that all searches for ECCT staff positions include at least two people of color, or one, if there are fewer than four people in total, among the final candidates interviewed.

This resolution was designed to offer steps for parishes and worshipping communities to engage in the loving, liberating, and life-giving work of racial healing, justice, and reconciliation with the hope that the Season would be the start of creating a new way of living and loving our neighbor.

## **LIVING INTO THE RESOLUTION**

Following our Convention, the bishops convened a Racial Healing Summit on November 28, 2018 to plan how ECCT would live into the resolution. Twenty-nine clergy and lay people participated in addition to the bishops. ECCT staff and the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network agreed to share responsibility for ensuring that the actions defined in the resolution and the Question #2 report were completed. What follows is a report of our progress since the 2018 Convention.

We are pleased to report that the bishops and staff took to heart the convention resolution and fulfilled the commitments called for by convention. Similarly, many parishes, clergy and lay people fully embraced both the spirit and the letter of the resolution.

As a first step, we began by defining our goals for the Season of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation as well as our thoughts about how we might assess our progress, and we shared them widely across ECCT and Province I.

### **Our Goals**

- Embed in ECCT's DNA the wholeness that comes when we all treat each other as children of God.
- Raise awareness that the sin of racism *still* has a very powerful presence in ECCT and beyond.
- Understand exactly what white supremacy is and the specific role it plays in enabling the sin of racism among us.
- Ensure we have a critical mass of trained facilitators who can enable groups and individuals to have truth-telling conversations and actively listen to each other's stories about racism.
- Enable people to gain the level of comfort needed to have conversations about racism and how they perpetuate it.
- Create formation opportunities that will help individuals be more open to developing close friendships with people of different races/ethnicities.

### **Indicators of Progress**

We will use both subjective (anecdotal) and objective data to measure the impact the Season is having in ECCT. Possible measures and data collection methods will include:

- The extent to which people freely share stories about how they've been transformed by this work
- The degree to which people of color report they feel free to apply for all jobs for which they are qualified
- Attendance at events
- Frequency of contacts with people of another race
- Data provided in the 2019 parochial reports
- Results of a diocesan-wide survey

### **The Resolutions**

#### ***Resolved #1***

In order to introduce foundational concepts, language, and tools to help encourage and enable congregations to begin opening hearts and minds; recognize the reality of white supremacy and bias

against people of color; and awaken Episcopalians in Connecticut to the need for concerted action to address the ongoing injustice of the racial divide, the ECCT staff and the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network partnered to provide parishes and worshipping communities with a variety of tools and resources as detailed below. We used our first Day of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation on February 10, 2019 as a target for beginning this process. Ongoing efforts include the provision of bulletin inserts as a way to encourage communities to continue this process with mindfulness.

## **STAFF-LED INITIATIVES**

### ***Resolved #2***

On January 3, 2019, Bishop Ian T. Douglas and Bishop Laura J. Ahrens sent a [letter](#) to the Episcopal Church in Connecticut reviewing Convention Resolution #3 and reminding everyone to set aside the second Sunday in February as a Day of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation to begin a conversation about the sin of racism in our lives and in the world. Their letter also included [liturgical resources](#) created by the Revs. April Alford-Harkey, Virginia Army, and Bevan Stanley as well as a “session plan” with video and discussion questions from the Joint Session on Racial Reconciliation from the 2018 General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

### ***Resolved #3***

A simple report will be developed that each parish will be asked to submit to the Mission Council with their annual Parochial Reports detailing how they have engaged in conversation, study, and action regarding racial healing, justice, reconciliation, and the sin of racism.

### ***Resolved #4***

Lee Ann Tolzmann, Canon for Mission Leadership, and Robin Hammeal Urban, Canon for Mission Integrity and Training, developed a two-hour workshop entitled *Exploring Unconscious Bias for Parishes in Transition*. The workshop focuses on the impact of white privilege and the importance of including diverse candidates in every search. The resolution set the expectation that all leaders in clergy transition will participate in the training. To date, ECCT has held one training session, and 25 leaders of the four parishes who were in the search process participated, representing 100% of all target parishes. In 2020, the Office for Mission Leadership again plans to offer sessions of *Exploring Unconscious Bias* for all parishes in the search process.

Of the three churches who have concluded their searches, only Good Shepherd, Hartford included candidates of color in their searches. Neither Calvary, Stonington nor Christ Church, Redding had any candidates of color included in their pool.

### ***Resolved #5***

A final component of Resolution #3 was that all searches for ECCT staff positions include at least two people of color, or one, if there are fewer than four people in total, among the final candidates interviewed. In 2019, ECCT has had eight staff transitions to date. Of those eight openings, ECCT has hired six people of color.

ECCT staff spent more time than usual recruiting, and God provided us with an abundance of great candidates. The Bishops and Canons used a variety of tools and interviews to narrow down the candidate pool, and as specified in the resolution, all searches included at least two people of color among the final candidates interviewed, or one if there were fewer than four people in total.

The [2018 Report to Convention](#) submitted by the Affirming Racial Reconciliation Working Group (now known as the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network) also committed to the following initiatives:

- In support of the canonical requirement that all clergy must participate in an anti-racism educational program once every three years, collaborate with Faith and Order to support ongoing continuing education for all ECCT clergy and lay leaders.
- Support the Commission on Ministry in fulfilling their charge to incorporate racial reconciliation work (reading, conversation, experiences) in the ordination process.

## **MINISTRY NETWORK-LED INITIATIVES**

The Rev. Rowena Kemp (rowjkemp@gmail.com) and Suzy Burke (suzy@alegriaimports.net) are the co-conveners of the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network. Given the scope of the work they agreed to lead at the Racial Reconciliation Summit, they organized themselves into five teams:

- Communications Team led by the Rev. Diana Rogers (revdianamrogers@gmail.com)
- Training & Resources Team led by Sue Roman (sroman@picomaya.com)
- Pilgrimage & Event Coordination Team led by Valarie Stanley (v.j.stanley5@gmail.com) and the Rev. Anne Fraley (wolfdance9@gmail.com)
- Advocacy/Civic Engagement Team led by the Rev. Tracy Johnson Russell (tjr5683@gmail.com)
- Reconciliation Team led by Carol Taylor (caroltaylor61a@gmail.com) and the Rev. Rowena Kemp (rowjkemp@gmail.com)

In addition, a Core Team composed of the team leaders and June Aziz, Don Hamer, Lina Howell, Linda Spiers and Lisa Yarbor meets monthly and works collaboratively to prioritize initiatives, design events for the Leadership Gathering at its quarterly meetings at The Commons, plan the Ministry Network's quarterly retreats, and assess our progress. To date, the Core Team has held ten meetings and facilitated four full day meeting attended by 30 people on average.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

While there is still much work that staff and the Ministry Network need to do together, there is definitely a wide embrace of this Convention-approved initiative, and there is a high level of interest, energy, enthusiasm, and commitment across ECCT. More than 140 people have asked to be involved in our work, and 220+ people have participated in the events our Ministry Network has sponsored this year, not including our workshops with ECCT's Leadership Gathering.

In addition, the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network has accomplished the following:

### **LEADERSHIP GATHERINGS**

An important aspect of our work is raising awareness about the sin of racism in ECCT among the members of the Leadership Gathering which is composed of members of the Mission Council, the Standing Committee, the Commission on Ministry, and Donations and Bequests. We lived into this priority by spending time at each quarterly Leadership Gathering in conversation and prayer.

*March 9, 2019* (one hour)

Our focus in March was *Stand Your Ground* by Kelly Brown Douglas, and we began our time together in silent meditation so people could reflect on what they experienced reading Douglas's profound book. This

was followed by a discussion, in pairs, of *Stand Your Ground*, and we concluded our time together by providing an update on the many initiatives the Racial Healing, Justice and Reconciliation Ministry Network is undertaking.

*June 8, 2019 (45 minutes)*

We began our time together by sharing an update on our ministry network's progress since we were last together, and this was followed by an invitation to all participants to share how they and their worshipping communities are living into the Season of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation.

As a way to briefly share the experience five members of the Leadership Gathering had on a pilgrimage to Montgomery and Birmingham, Alabama, we showed [Faces in the Water](#), a DVD from the Southern Poverty Law Center's [Civil Rights Memorial](#). In response to the video, we asked people to talk in small groups about what broke their hearts as they watched the video, and what they thought God might be calling them to do to foster racial healing, justice and reconciliation.

*September 14, 2019 (45 minutes)*

In our to time together, we invited members of the Leadership Gathering to talk about their experiences worshipping with people of a different race and we solicited feedback on our Report to Convention.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS TEAM** – the Rev. Diana Rogers ([revdianamrogers@gmail.com](mailto:revdianamrogers@gmail.com))

- Added a [Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation page on ECCT's website](#)
- Designed and published a Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation logo
- Created a Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Facebook page
- Developed and published a bulletin insert template and style guide
- Wrote and published a monthly insert for church bulletins – seven (7) published to date
- Recorded podcasts focused on racial healing - five (5) recorded to date
- Wrote ECCT blog posts – one (1) to date
- Wrote eNews articles – recurring monthly updates

Yet numbers can't give the whole picture of what the first year of the Season of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation has meant to ECCT thus far. Many are doing all they can to live into our collective commitments to the Season, and we see congregations engaged in the hard, and sometimes frustrating, work of taking an honest look at personal and institutional racism. Folks who were acquaintances have become friends and mentors, and our lively discussions about racism and its history in Connecticut and the U.S. have enlightened and transformed our lives and our work.

We know healing the wounds of racism, old and fresh, can seem an insurmountable task and, perhaps, a fool's errand. Yet we Episcopalians are fools for Christ, and have been from the very start. We tackle the insurmountable because Jesus calls us to it; because Jesus assures us that there is nothing to fear when He stands with us. We participate in the mission of the Church, "to restore all people to unity with God and to each other in Christ." With God's help, and yours, we can make a crack in the cycle of racism in the Church and in the world. We pray that you will join us.

## **TRAINING AND RESOURCES TEAM** - Sue Roman (sroman@picomaya.com)

- Created a Speaker's Bureau with more than a dozen trained facilitators and discussion leaders who are available to lead Sunday morning forums, book studies, and evening/weekend series as well as preach from the pulpit when coupled with a presentation following the service. Resources include thought provoking videos, feature-length movies, and all sorts of articles and books as points of departure for an engaging discussion about a sensitive and complex topic. Events will be customized to meet the needs of each congregation or group. Contact the Rev. Don Hamer, 860-614-1360 or [dlhquadzilla2@yahoo.com](mailto:dlhquadzilla2@yahoo.com) for more information.
- Facilitated a workshop on Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation at the 2018 Convention (standing room only)
- Hosted a table staffed by members of the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network and other volunteers to showcase resources, share ideas, and have conversation to create awareness
- Delivered two (2) workshops delivered at Spring Training - *Racial Healing, Justice, & Reconciliation: The Way Forward in ECCT* (49 people registered)
- Sponsored *Healing, and Ending, the Trauma of Anti-Black Racism*, a workshop led by Enola Aird, founder of the Community Healing Network (25 people registered)
- Shared an annotated resource list of print, web and film resources on ECCT's website as well as materials from the Leadership Gathering's June 9<sup>th</sup> half-day workshop, *A Process for Engaging in Racial Healing, Justice and Reconciliation Conversations*, that includes a leader guide, workshop materials and discussion starters.
- Developed and distributed a resource list that parishes can use for book discussions and forums
- Presented at the North Central Region Convocation and led a workshop using [Eric Law's Photolanguage Cards](#)

## **PILGRIMAGE AND EVENT COORDINATION TEAM** - Valarie Stanley (v.j.stanley5@gmail.com) and the Rev. Anne Fraley (wolfdance9@gmail.com)

**November 14, 2018:** Hosted a performance of *The Queens of the Golden Mask*, the world premiere of a play about the women of the KKK, at the Ivoryton Playhouse in Essex, CT for 189 ECCT folk. The play was followed by a talk back with the cast, and chaplains were in attendance to provide pastoral care to anyone in need.

**March 17, 2019:** Participated in the Friends and Family service hosted by St. Luke's, New Haven.

**April 6, 2019: Christ Church Cathedral** co-hosted a one-day workshop with Kelly Brown Douglas on the history of racism at our Cathedral with the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network.

**July 13, 2019:** Hosted *Confronting the Slave Trade in our Back Yard*. The pilgrimage kicked off with a tour and prayer service led by the Rev. Jane Hale at Old Trinity Church, a church built by enslaved persons. Thirty-two pilgrims then boarded a bus to Providence, RI for a three-hour urban walking tour led by [Center for Reconciliation](#).

**November 15 – 16, 2019:** We have planned and publicized our [upcoming pilgrimage](#) to The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture in Washington, D.C.

**RECONCILIATION TEAM** - Carol Taylor (caroltaylor61a@gmail.com) and the Rev. Rowena Kemp (rowjkemp@gmail.com)

Through their work, the team has affirmed that reconciliation begins in the heart and never ends. To deepen their understanding, they have done extensive research on the approach to reconciliation that each of the following organizations uses:

- CT Center for Non-Violence
- Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution
- Mozambique Rituals of Cleansing
- Meditate to Mediate
- Namaste Dialogue toward Racial Reconciliation
- Nauset Interfaith Association of Cape Cod
- Rwanda National Unity & Reconciliation Commission

Even more important, members of our Ministry Network initiated conversations between St. Luke's, New Haven and Trinity on the Green, New Haven. Racism led the founders of St. Luke's to establish their own worshipping community more than a century ago, and for the first time in 175 years, members of the two parishes are in conversation with each other. They have asked for privacy until they are ready to make their work public.

**ADVOCACY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TEAM** – the Rev. Tracy Johnson Russell (tjr5683@gmail.com)

The Advocacy Team identified the following initiatives as their priorities:

- Host a Prayer Breakfast at our Cathedral or St. Monica's
- Identify Episcopalians who are active in the legislative life of CT
- Identify what organizations state-wide are already doing

The team has had some modest success in identifying state-wide organizations engaging in advocacy work such as Mothers Against Gun Violence, the Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Healthcare, the Greater Hartford Interfaith Alliance, the Christian Activities Council, and the Universal Health Care Foundation. In the last legislative session, they also identified legislation around education, health, housing, and employment that aligned with their advocacy platform and shared that information with and encouraged participation in "actions" by interested members of ECCT.

Over the course of this year, it has become very clear that in order to be effective in this work, it is crucial that there be a centralized mechanism established within ECCT to help drive this work.

## **CONVENTION QUESTION #2 ON RACISM**

As part of the 2018 Convention, one of the four questions discussed using the World Café methodology was: *How can ECCT raise awareness of the sin of racism in our Church and promote healing toward true racial reconciliation?*

The group's report stated: The history of racism in the Episcopal Church is not unlike the history of racism in this country. We acknowledge that the problem is in part predicated on ignorance and fear. Furthermore, as ECCT, we participate in this systemic behavior and mentality. As the Church, we are called and are

uniquely equipped to challenge racism. As people of faith, we must create safe space to hold transforming conversations in which members of our church communities may tell our stories and deepen relationships.

The group also defined the following next steps which were approved by Convention:

1. Create educational resources to address the history of White supremacy
2. Curate and distribute resources around facilitating the conversation of racism
3. Identify models of reconciliation around the issue of racism
4. Encourage more civic involvement surrounding the issue of racism

To support this work, Convention also approved funding for a 10-hour per week Diocesan position to facilitate the gathering, curating, and dissemination of resources as described in the next steps.

### **Fulfilling the Mandate of the Convention Question #2 Report**

The HR team created a job description that reflected Racism Question #2's Report to Convention, and initiated the search for a Racial Justice Resource Coordinator to work 10 hours/week. They received over 90 applications and spoke with a number of excellent candidates doing exceptional work around justice issues. ECCT hired Kelli Gibson, currently a student at Yale (Black Church Studies) and Yale Divinity School (M.A.R.), to serve as the Racial Justice Resource Coordinator.

## **ECCT, REGION AND PARISH INITIATIVES**

### **ECCT**

**Clergy Conference:** ECCT hosted a clergy conference focused on the theme of *Speaking Truth to Power in Love and Courage*. The conference addressed racism indirectly, and provided space for honest conversation about the importance of understanding our own stories, biases and privileges.

ECCT also sponsored all six ECCT Region Missionaries to attend a thought-provoking workshop called *White Supremacy 101* hosted by Trinity Church in Boston and facilitated by Trinity Boston Connects (<https://trinityconnects.org>).

**Deacons in ECCT:** Since we are in the *Season of Racial Healing, Justice and Reconciliation*, we have invited the Rev. Chuck Wynder, Staff Officer for Social Justice and Advocacy Engagement, Reconciliation, Justice and Creation Care in the Episcopal Church to serve as the preacher at our upcoming Renewal of Vows on November 10th. The deacons of ECCT are reading [The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row](#) by Anthony Ray Hinton with Lara Love Hardin and an introduction by Bryan Stevenson.

### **OUR CATHEDRAL**

Our Cathedral co-hosted a one-day workshop with Kelly Brown Douglas on the history of racism at our Cathedral with the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network.

They also showed a clip of [James Earl Jones reading Frederick Douglas's speech on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July](#), and this was followed by a lively discussion about what this speech says to us today. The group continues to meet virtually and in person.

## CAMP WASHINGTON

Camp Washington's is offering an anti-racism youth program, *Creating Brave Space*, at a teen weekend from November 1 – 3. It is adapted from the program developed by Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing in the Diocese of Atlanta.

## REGIONS

**North Central and South Central Regions:** In July and August, the leaders of the North Central and South Central Regions hosted a three-week film series based on Trinity Wall Street's [Scene & Unseen: Facing Racism through Film](#). Participants watched [Blindspotting](#), [Do the Right Thing](#) and *Traces of the Trade* as well as excerpts from panel discussions at Trinity Church Wall Street's conference as a way to begin a conversation about race and racism in our country and in our communities. They were invited to use the films as a lens into new perspectives as well as a mirror to explore their own thoughts about, and experiences of, race.

Folks were thoroughly engaged with the material and conversations could have gone on for hours. Having heard a desire to continue conversation and explore more materials from *Scene & Unseen*, the planning team hopes to offer another opportunity to gather in the near future to continue the work.

**North Central Region Convocation:** To help enter the *Season of Racial Healing Justice and Reconciliation*, the North Central Region's Spring Convocation was focused solely on this. The agenda included a variety of experiences: Dwelling in the Word was based on text from Howard Thurman's [Jesus and the Disinherited](#), and the group watched [Faces in the Water](#), a video created by the [Civil Rights Memorial](#). This was followed by personal story sharing in small groups through [Eric Law's Photolanguage Cards](#), and the co-conveners of the Ministry Network shared resources individuals and groups can use as they live into the *Season*. After lunch, parishes shared how they responded to the call to create a program for a Day of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation on [February 10, 2019](#).

**North Central Region Retreat:** People from the following parishes participated in an annual pre-Lenten retreat to Holy Cross Monastery: Trinity, Collinsville; Grace, Hartford; Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford; Trinity, Hartford; Trinity, Newtown; and others from the North Central Region. The retreat was led by the Revs. Rowena Kemp and Linda Spiers and focused on Howard Thurman's book [Meditations of the Heart](#). Each retreatant was given a copy of Thurman's book to use during Lent. The retreat theme was "Softening the Heart" knowing that the work of racial healing, justice, and reconciliation requires work of the heart. At the conclusion of the retreat, they used the *Commissioning for the Ministry of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation* as provided by the Ministry Network, and retreatants were commissioned to do the work to come.

**South Central Region:** is hosting powerful conversations between St. Luke's, New Haven and Trinity on the Green about their common history, what that history means, and the work they are doing to educate their parishes.

## PARISHES

### **Southwest Region**

**St. Mark's New Canaan** initially engaged the congregation on February 10<sup>th</sup> and began a series of planning sessions on how to move forward. The result thus far is the offering of monthly *New Canaan*

*Dinners: Table Conversations on Race* to be held in September, October, and November. These are being overseen by a parishioner and deacon Kyle Pedersen of [Elm City - UROC](#) (Elm City Organizing Collective), both of whom have extensive experience with the work of undoing racism. In addition, the parish has set aside three Sundays to address some aspect of racism as part of a year-long series entitled *Fully Alive* in partnership with the Yale Center for Faith and Culture. These sessions include a bible study on racism; a teaching about diversity, inclusion, and equity; and a talk about racism in the United States today.

**St Paul's, Norwalk** has a long running commitment to hosting book discussions, documentaries and films every Wednesday. They have a mailing list of 40 people and an average of 20 people participate each Wednesday evening. They started to discuss their 17<sup>th</sup> book the week of September 9<sup>th</sup>: *How to Be an Antiracist*. In addition, they have done extensive research on Norwalk's Fair Housing practices, redlining, and zoning. They have attended various city meetings on these issues, posed challenging questions and made statements pointing out inequalities. They are also researching the inequalities that exist in the Norwalk education system and exploring ways they can support NAACP's activities in Norwalk.

**Trinity, Southport** offered Stations of the Cross for the community on Good Friday, and in preparation, people were invited to join in conversation about the enslaved persons who lived in Southport.

**St. James's Danbury** showed the film *The Green Book* followed by a discussion, and they have also hosted a book discussion on [Waking Up White](#) by Debby Irving.

### **South Central Region**

**St. Luke's, New Haven** celebrated a Day of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation using the materials provide by ECCT. They also showed the [TEConversation with Dr. Catherine Meeks](#) recorded at a Joint Session of the House of Bishops and House of Deputies that took place at the 2018 General Convention in Austin. This was followed by a discussion about how this affects them as a Black church, and where they would like to go from here. They also listened to Coffee Hour at the Commons Episode 34: *Voices from the Black Diaspora* during coffee hour after both services.

**St. Thomas' New Haven** has created a group on racial reconciliation and developed a series of events that will be held at the church and led by lay leaders. They are also continuing to preach about racial reconciliation from the pulpit.

### **Southeast Region**

**St. Andrew's, Madison** used the litany provided by ECCT on February 10<sup>th</sup>, and three sermons this year have focused on racial healing, justice, and reconciliation. They have also hosted a forum on racism and privilege, and had a presentation on *Slavery in America and the Underground Railroad*. In addition, they are planning to show *Traces of the Trade*, followed by a discussion.

**St. John's Essex** held a forum on February 10<sup>th</sup> on *Slavery in America and the Underground Railroad*, and the rector hosted a two-session book discussion on [Waking Up White](#) by Debby Irving.

**St. Mark's, Mystic** offered an adult forum series in February to introduce the *Season of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation*. A second series is planned in November 2019 for sharing stories from the Peace and Justice Pilgrimage to sites in Montgomery, Alabama that Pastor Adam went on with New London area clergy in April. In addition, St. Mark's website now includes a resource page of articles, books, and videos for people to begin engaging in the movement for racial justice. Finally, a steering committee has come together to lay out opportunities for partnerships and engagements in 2020 and beyond.

**St. James, New London** has regularly used relevant inserts for the Sunday bulletins from the National Church and the Union of Black Episcopalians, and included articles in the NET, their newsletter, each time it was published. They have a list of books, videos and events on their website, and a group of parishioners are doing research on the slaves and slaveholders who were members of St. James. In addition, eight parishioners attended *Queens of the Golden Mask* at the Ivoryton Playhouse in November.

They also had a special worship service on February 10, 2019, and Lottie Scott, author of [Deep South, Deep North: A Family's Journey](#), spoke at an event that was open to the public. This was followed by a forum on May 5<sup>th</sup> that explored how racism affects our bodies, and on May 18<sup>th</sup>, Sunday school students and their families and other members of the parish joined the New London Landmarks Society to clean up the [Ye Antientist Burial Ground](#) where many of the early enslaved persons are buried.

Thanks to a UTO Grant from the National Church, they were also able to offer anti-racism and leadership training to 27 youth from SECT organization from July 31 - August 2 in collaboration with Hearing Youth Voices. They tolled their church bells for four minutes and read a litany of repentance on August 25<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM to commemorate the day that the first enslaved Africans landed on the shores of Virginia. They also hosted series of talks by the New London Landmarks Society, and the most recent one was on the life of [Ichabod Pease](#), a slave and a freeman who was a member of St. James parish. At 81, he opened a free school for black children in New London. Finally, they helped plan the Faith Behind Bars and Beyond forum entitled *Incarceration Imprisons the Whole Family*.

### **Northwest Region**

**Trinity Episcopal Church, Torrington**, hosted a six-week discussion series about white privilege and how it affects those who have it as well as those who don't. The facilitators were the Rev. Sara Krhla of Church of Christ Congregational, the Rev. Rhonda Myers of United Congregational Church, and Conrad Sienkiewicz of Trinity Episcopal Church. Participants will watch brief videos, read a few short articles, and did some optional journaling.

**Trinity Lime Rock** has been faithfully using the bulletin inserts, and they have hosted two book discussions.

### **North Central Region**

**Grace, Hartford** kicked off the Season in February by inviting a jazz musician who plays music composed by African Americans to join their coffee hour after every service as a way of beginning the conversation. They are also finding racial healing in their work associated with *Joining Jesus in the New Missional Age*. They are using it as an opportunity to see their community with new eyes and reconnect with their neighbors in light of the fact that their congregation is not representative of the community. They are learning a lot about who they thought they were, who they are, and who the community thinks they are.

**St. Monica's Hartford** has been in conversation with author Lottie B. Scott who has written [Deep South, Deep North: A Family's Journey](#), the story of her journey from South Carolina to Norwich, Connecticut and they will invite her to lead a conversation about her seminal book.

**St. John's West Hartford** invited Dr. Stacy Close, professor of history and African American studies at Eastern CT State College and a very dynamic speaker, to lead a forum.

**Trinity Hartford** is dedicating one forum a month to the sin of racism in ECCT. In one forum, a Black college student spoke about the systemic injustice that African American women experience in the US.

**Trinity, Collinsville** used the resources provided by the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network on [February 10<sup>th</sup>](#) at both the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services and the sermon wove together the appointed lessons with racial healing, justice, and reconciliation. The bulletin also explained ECCT's hopes for the Season in detail.

**Church of Epiphany, Durham** hosted an interfaith reading group with books related to race in various forms as well as a series of workshops on race and privilege. On October 6<sup>th</sup>, they will host an intergenerational sing-along led by Soyinka Rahim Rakeem who uses interplay as a tool to explore themes of racial equity and transformation for adults and teens.

**Emanuel, Killingworth** has made racial healing, justice, and reconciliation a focus in their sermons and discussions. They are a church that welcomes everyone, and in their closely knit church family, there is only love, respect and inclusion.

**Holy Trinity, Middletown** hosted the local Martin Luther King, Jr. Day march and celebration welcoming people from many of the traditionally black churches in Middletown into their midst for a community service of music, poetry, and spoken word around the life of the civil rights leader. There is a strong black clergy association in Middletown and in the past, they have made it known that those in white mainline denominations were not welcome to join. However, there seems to be a new wind blowing and some of the new leaders seem to be softening that stance.

In February, they held a very successful parish forum using the plan mapped out by ECCT. One of the desires of the group was to form better alliances with the black churches in their city. Wanting to build on the momentum generated by that, they used the season theme for their Lenten Series and met between services on four Sundays during Lent for a variety of forums including:

- A group discussion on *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* by Dr. Peggy McIntosh
- A TED Talk by Debby Irving, author of *Waking Up White: Finding Myself in the Story of Race*
- A presentation by their parish historian on *The Triangle Trade and the Merchants of Middletown* which taught them about the racial history of their own parish
- Sharing their own experiences with race using [Eric Law's Photolanguage Cards](#)

This Lenten Series was profound for those who participated. They found that assigning reading homework didn't work as well as doing things on the spot. The best sessions were the presentations on their parish history which drew people from beyond their congregation to attend and the conversations generated by the Photolanguage cards. They left that one for last so that the group would have a chance to develop a sense of safety with one another, something which let them share at a deeper level. They feel very fortunate in that many of their parishioners of color have participated in their discussions and the parish has shown itself to be quite open to addressing the topic of race.

**St. Mark's, New Britain** used the materials provided for the [February 10<sup>th</sup>](#) service, and they held a joint service with the other churches of color in their building in celebration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In addition, they participated in a joint walk through the streets of New Britain as a sign of solidarity with one another on Good Friday. They are also working in partnership with other churches and organizations in town to mitigate trauma in the community among all races, and they have watched the documentary *Resilience* together. They have also held at two adult forums on the subject of racial reconciliation, and their Joining Jesus group walked through town and noted the plaques in the sidewalk that memorialize New Britain's efforts to address racial reconciliation.

**Grace Church, Windsor** hopes to get the Vestry and the parishioners involved in an anti-racism program. They are also exploring the possibility of teaming with other churches in Windsor. To date, they have

conducted a Bibliodrama in which they used enactments to explore issues of race in a story by African American writer Ann Petry. They will also use Ted Talks such as Chimimanda Ngozi's *The Danger of a Single Story* followed by discussion that will include members of the community. In addition, parishioners have attended a federally funded 12-hour program at Windsor High School on White privilege, and they are meeting this month to plan activities for this program year.

**St. Paul's Southington** used the introduction of Debby Irving's [Waking Up White](#) as the focus of Dwelling in the Word, and they devoted four Sundays in Lent to a series of activities. They watched and discussed *The Danger of a Single Story* and they also talked about the extent to which people and organizations in Connecticut were complicit in slavery and the slave trade. In addition, they spent two Sundays talking about institutional racism through mechanisms like the GI Bill, mortgage lending and redlining. The final Sunday was focused on implicit bias. They have also scheduled forums for four Sundays in January and February.

**Grace Newington** read Debby Irving's [Waking Up White](#). Based on their excellent discussion, they suggested that the leadership team read a section of the book as a devotional before each meeting and asking the question: How does this relate to me and my life? In addition, they hosted an all parish discussion on the book.

### *Northeast Region*

**St. Peter's South Windsor** invited a member of the parish who attended an exhibit about Jim Crow at the Connecticut Historical Society to share her experience, and they have also invited a White South African man to preach about his own struggle to unlearn his racist attitudes. In addition, they plan to lead a book group focused on racism.

**St. James, Glastonbury** used the materials provided for the February 10<sup>th</sup> service and in the Spring, they led a book discussion on *Living into God's Dream; Dismantling Racism in America*. This month, they will host an adult forum where they will see *Traces of the Trade*, and they hope to engage more and more of their congregation in this work as they continue the conversations.

**St. Mark's Storrs** delivered sermons on racial healing, justice, and reconciliation and they have had a special guest preacher who is African American speak directly on the topic.

At the same time, many parishes are struggling to spread the fire a few parishioners feel about the injustice of racism to the rest of the congregation.

## **ONGOING CHALLENGES**

The Ministry Network has identified the following challenges to progress through their work with congregations:

- Two years is not enough time to address the sin of racism in ECCT and undo the biases and prejudices that have developed over the last 400 years.
- Although we have shared an abundance of resources, there does not seem to be much communication reaching parishioners in some parishes. In addition, many parishes do not have an engaged, critical mass of people committed to addressing the sin of racism in our midst. We need to find a more effective way to engage clergy and our Region Missionaries to help us reach the people in the pews and give them an opportunity to participate on a deeper level.

- ECCT has many White enclaves filled with people who are unaware that racism is still an issue in America, and if it is, it's not "our issue". We need to find ways to help people understand the role unconscious bias plays in perpetuating racism.
- People don't seem to know how to engage and take action. In the 1960's, people marched, and now that people aren't marching on a regular basis, they don't know what they *can* do. We need to offer more clear "on ramps" for engaging in this work.
- We need to find a way to help people feel the burn of injustice and invite them to take action against the sin of racism. How do we get people to say: "I made a promise – I'll speak for justice" as the young girl did in the [Faces in the Water](#) video?
- We need do more to expose people to our history of racism through personal stories. We need to educate them about how ever-present implicit bias creates an uneven playing field. Microaggressions (and worse) are still very much part of life in the US.
- There's concern about what (Black and White) Episcopal priests can say. They self-censor due to fear of triggering a Title IV complaint - Conduct Unbecoming of a Clergy Person. Black parishioners are also reluctant to share their truths.
- Clergy of color continue to experience racism at various levels in Connecticut.
- It is difficult to find clergy of color who want to serve in ECCT.

## **2020 PRIORITIES**

- Publicize our Speaker's Bureau and encourage Region leadership Teams, parishes and others to engage.
- Identify and promote programs to raise awareness about the sin of racism that can be used across ECCT.
- Offer training for missionaries and other facilitators in each Region so they are equipped to lead truth-telling conversations accompanied by active listening.
- Find a way to reach people in the pews and give them opportunities to participate in the work of dismantling racism on a very personal level.
- Find accessible ways for worshipping communities to tell and share their stories as well as their successes and failed experiments.
- Find ways to encourage and recruit clergy of color to explore a call in ECCT.
- Develop a strategy for raising new, diverse leaders in ECCT's Leadership Gathering and increase the diversity on our committees, commissions, etc.
- Find ways to better assist and support clergy of color in ECCT.
- Host a pilgrimage to Montgomery and Birmingham, AL.
- Host walking tours in Connecticut along red lines. Redlining is a discriminatory practice in lenders refuse to lend money or extend credit to borrowers in certain areas of town or when realtors won't show properties to people of color in predominantly White neighborhoods.
- Create our own *History of Racism* panels similar to those Rhode Island's Center for Reconciliation created. Host more formation and advocacy events.

- Identify an ECCT reconciliation project that may qualify for funding from the wider Episcopal Church.

Respectfully,

Members of the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network

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